

MEMBERSHIP.

The question of the status of a delinquent member of a county society and his relation to the State Society in delinquency and if he pays up, is a matter that frequently comes to our attention. It was raised recently by a Councillor, and the letter sent him in reply covers the case so fully that it is here printed:

February 23, 1916.

Dr. Jas. H. Parkinson,
1005 K St., Sacramento.

Dear Doctor:

Answering your letter of the 21st, under the By-Laws of the State Society, the name of any physician who has not been reported and paid for before March 1st, but who may have been on our rolls the previous year, is dropped as of the first of the current year. He is not a delinquent member; **he ceases to be a member**, and he remains not a member until such time as a County Society reports his name as a member of that County Society and remits his assessment.

If he is dropped or suspended from a County Society for one or two years, it is a matter of business indifference to us, because he simply is not on our rolls as a member; and if he subsequently pays up in his County Society, he becomes a member of this Society only from the date when he is last reported and the assessment of the current year paid. There is no possible way in which we can re-instate him as to membership in a previous year.

Under our rules, a member to receive the benefit of medical defense, must have been a member in good standing at the time when the alleged malpractice occurred and also at the time when the suit was filed. In the case you cite, if one who was suspended for non-payment of dues during the whole of 1915, but who has now paid to your Society this amount and the dues for 1916, should be sued for an act occurring during 1915, he is without the provisions of our medical defense and consequently not entitled to its benefits. The date of the alleged cause of action is as important as the date of the filing of the complaint, and both dates must be within the times at which the individual was a member, fully paid up and in good standing.

Cordially yours,

PHILIP MILLS JONES,
Secretary.

PMJ:S

ACCOUNTS.

In this number of the JOURNAL will be found the report of the auditors covering the year 1915. It shows some small gain over the previous year, but not much; the excessive cost of some suits for damages for alleged malpractice in 1913 and 1914 piled up a heavy burden to carry. However, our credit is good and we have no trouble in borrowing some money toward the end of the year, to tide us over. If you examine the statement, you will see that the bank paid us more money in interest on our balance during the early part of the year, than we paid them for the loan of \$1,500 at the end of the year. The accounts have been put

in charge of a clerk, and a new system of accounting for subscriptions has been started. Also, the reporting of members is no longer accepted on prescription blanks, the back of an envelope, etc. All names must be reported on the pink sheets supplied to secretaries, and when names are not so reported the report is sent back to be properly made. There are now three clerks working in your office, and they are busy all the time. Everything relating to money goes through at least three hands and thus a safeguard is placed upon all of us. About two-thirds of the Secretary's time is taken up with the legal work; suits and threats continue to increase. Not only are the accounts audited each year, but also, for the last two or three years, members of the Council have gone personally to the auditors and have discussed with them the condition of the office, methods of accounting, system, etc. If it were not for the burden of medical defense, the Society would be in excellent financial condition; but if the Society did not do it, it would cost the individual members a great deal more than we are now paying.

CO-OPERATION WITH INSURANCE COMPANY.

Speaking of "lack of co-operation with the insurance companies," the following letter is rather interesting. It is from a member who holds insurance and who was sued. We thought it safer, for certain reasons, not to leave the defense of the suit to the attorney for the insurance company, and so our own legal department took charge of the trial of the suit. To be sure, we let the insurance company pay the court costs, etc., and their attorney was associated in the action; but our attorney did all the actual work of the trial. Incidentally, it cost the Society about \$275, and under the rules, we were not called upon to do anything.

February 15, 1916.

State Medical Society,
San Francisco, Cal.

Dear Sirs:

It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge my gratitude to the Society for their co-operation and efforts in my behalf in the recent damage suit against me which has ended so pleasantly for us.

Mr. _____ has extended every courtesy in the matter, and together with Mr. _____ of the _____ Company, they have left nothing undone, and the results must be very gratifying to them as they are to me. It is a great comfort to all of us to feel that the Society is back of us. And the fact that so few judgments are rendered against the physician, should prove to the public that they are black-mailing schemes on the part of grafters to obtain money in an easy way. I wish something could be done to protect us from such attacks, and I feel that we should be able to get a bill through compelling these people to put up a bond for at least \$1000.00 before beginning a suit of this kind. I don't think there would be many suits.

Thanking you again, I am,

Very sincerely and fraternally yours,